



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Operator Permits for the South Atlantic Rock Shrimp and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fisheries

Beginning November 23, 2004, operator permit cards (**operator cards**) will be required for an operator of a vessel that has, or is required to have, a charter vessel/headboat or commercial vessel permit for Atlantic dolphin-wahoo. Operator cards have been required in the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery since May 16, 2003.

Persons who already possess an operator card to participate in the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery do not need to obtain a separate operator card to operate a vessel that is permitted to participate in the Atlantic dolphin-wahoo fishery.

Similarly, operator cards issued by NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Regional Office for the Fisheries of the Northeastern United States or for the American Lobster Fishery **do** meet the South Atlantic rock shrimp and Atlantic dolphin-wahoo operator card requirement. NOAA Fisheries initially determined that a separate operator card was needed for the Atlantic dolphin-wahoo fishery, even if operators already possessed an operator card for a northeast fishery. After further review of the requirements for these two operator cards, NOAA Fisheries determined that persons possessing Northeast Region operator cards who are operating vessels that participate in the South Atlantic rock shrimp or Atlantic dolphin-wahoo fisheries **do not need** to obtain a separate operator card for those two fisheries.

At this time, operator cards issued by the Southeast Regional Office **do not** meet the requirement for Northeast Region operator cards.

Operators possessing an operator card for the fisheries in the Northeast Region (or the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery) and who have received a separate operator card for the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery or the Atlantic dolphin-wahoo fishery may request reimbursement of the cost for that second operator card. In a written signed request, operators must include the original Southeast Regional Office operator card and a photocopy of their valid Northeast Region operator card, along with a valid mailing address. Send the written signed request to:

Southeast Regional Office
NOAA Fisheries, Permits Branch
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702

A person required to have an operator card must carry that card on board the vessel along with one other form of personal identification that includes a picture (driver license, passport, etc.).

This and other news releases are available on the Southeast Regional Office homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>. NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce.